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## THE QUESTION OF MINORITIES IN CHINA

Kuan Shui-hsin

China is a country inhabited by people of many races. Since the beginning of recorded history there have always been intimate relations prevailing between the Chinese people and the minority peoples who live among them. Whether it is in cultural and commercial intercourse or in interracial marriage, they have greatly influenced one another. Today, the minorities occupy important positions as the supporting arms in the great task of constructing New China. Even the Chinese civilization, in its totality, is the work of the united effort of the Chinese and minority peoples. This is an undeniable fact.

As we reread our history, we can trace the many historical facts which show evidence of the friendly cooperation of the Chinese and the minority peoples; but, on the other hand, they sharply contrast with other incidences which have separated them. War, aggression, oppression, exploitation, and treachery have darkened the friendly relations of the various groups. These unfortunate historical incidents are nothing but the manifestations of the policies of the ruling class siming at the enslavement of other racial groups. All sorts of intrigue and chicanery are employed to carry out such shameless schemes. As a result, they are not only the cause of the cultural and economic backwardness of the minorities but they have also sown the seeds of mutual distrust and hatred among the various groups.

In the long history of China, the tyrannical and authoritarian governments knew nothing but conquest and suppression as their means of keeping the minorities under control. Since the founding of the Republic in 1911, the principle of the equality of races and nationalities has been accepted and adopted in the Three Principles of the People; yet, in the actual application of this principle many of the oppressive measures of the old authoritarian regimes were employed. As Chairman Mao points out in his Coalition Government: "The ruling clique of the reactionary Kuomintang government denied the existence of Chinese minorities. It simply labeled all racial groups, such as the Mongolians, Moslems, Tibetans, the I, the Miac, the Yieo, and other minority peoples, as 'kindred groups'. In its administration of minority affairs, it inherited all the reactionary policies

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of oppression and exploitation of the Manchu Imperial government and the government of the Northern Warlords." The co-called Ministry of Mongolian and Tibetar Affairs of the early period of the Republic, the Consultative Council of Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs of the reactionary Kuomintang government, and the Li Fan Yuan of the Manchu Imperial government, though differing in name, in essence are all the

Now, a new People's Republic has been born. Under the Central government of the People's Republic of China, which truly represents the common interests of all people of China, the minorities have their day of rebirth. Article IX of the Constitution, unanimously adopted by the People's Consultative Council, specifies that "All nationalities within the People's Republic shall have equal rights and privileges." In Article VI of Policy on Nationalities, special emphasis is placed on the unity of nationalities: "The People's Republic of China shall be so constituted that all nationalities therein shall live in friendship, and as good neighbors. All hatred, oppression, and all acts aimed at dividing the various nationalities are expressly prohibited."

In the same Article, it is also specified that "In areas in which the minority peoples are dominant, regional autonomy shall be granted." Besides, extensive opportunities for the development of racial languages, the establishment of local political, economic, and cultural institutions are guaranteed. Such a just constitution brings unlimited hope and light to the minorities in China. It closely unites all groups and nationalities so that they may march shoulder to shoulder toward a common objective.

The movement for emancipation of the minorities is inseparable from the all-out movement of the Chinese people for liberation and emancipation. In the past, Chiang Kai-shek attempted to exercise his reactionary control by conspiring with the upper-class feudalists within the minority groups. He united himself with such individuals as Teh Wang, Pai Yun-t'i of Mongolia, Pai Ch'ung-hsi, Ma Pu-fang, Ma Hung-k'uei of the Moslems, and many local feudalists, landlords, and bandits for the purpose of murder, treachery, enslavement, exploitation, and oppression. He created dissension and hatred among the racial groups.

Under such conditions it is natural that the minorities are determined to rise in the struggle for autonomy and self-determination. They want to be free of the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the triumvirate of imperialists, feudalists, and bureaucratic capitalists. But today, the great liberating movement has been victorious on the Chinese mainland. Conditions in liberated areas, however, are completely different. One of the goals of the minorities is the establishment of regional autonomy and the furtherance of the unity of racial groups. The regional autonomy in Inner Mongolia is an excellent example of the achievements of the principle of nationalities, under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party.

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